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Helping Organizations Retain Their Most Valuable Asset

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT

Every year on the third Thursday of November, smokers across the nation participate in the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout® by smoking less or quitting for the day. The event challenges people to stop using tobacco and raises awareness of the many effective ways to quit for good.

In many communities, local volunteers support quitters, publicize the event, and press for laws that control tobacco use and discourage teenagers from starting.

Research shows that smokers are most successful in kicking the habit when they have some means of support, such as nicotine replacement products, counseling, prescription medicine to lessen cravings, guide books, and the encouragement of friends and family members.

Despite that, only about one in seven current smokers reports having tried any of the recommended therapies during their last quit attempt.

Telephone quitlines are a convenient new resource, available for free in many states. Call 1-800-ACS-2345 to find a quitline or other science-based support in your area.

The following resources provide additional information on quitting smoking:

American Cancer Society
1-800-ACS-2345 / www.cancer.org
American Heart Association
1 800-242-8721 / www.amhrt.org
National Cancer Institute
Cancer Information Service
1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237)
www.cancer.gov
Nicotine Anonymous
www.nicotine-anonymous.org
Smokefree.gov
1-877-44U-QUIT (1-877-448-7848)
www.smokefree.gov

Source: American Cancer Society.

Have you ever felt treated like an outsider, cut out of the loop on an important decision, or thwarted in your attempts to improve a situation that definitely needed to be improved? Even if your good ideas were exactly what a particular group could benefit from using, possibly there was a powerful insider or a few entrenched keepers of the status quo who found a way to shoot down your suggestions.

According to Leonard Felder, PhD, author of the new book *FITTING IN IS OVERRATED: The Survival Guide for Anyone Who Has Ever Felt Like an Outsider*, "You are not alone. Most innovative, smart, and helpful men and women have felt at times as if their good ideas were bumping up against heavy resistance from people who feel threatened by anyone who's suggesting even the most realistic and positive changes."

It might be a situation in your extended family where you have some outstanding ideas on how to improve the next family gathering, but a certain powerful relative tends to veto anything that alters "the way we've always done it before." Or at work you might have a creative new solution to a long-standing problem, but one of the higher ups is opposed to any changes you suggest. Or you belong to a church, temple, parent-teacher association, condo association, or volunteer group where you've come up with some excellent suggestions for improving things, but one or two cliquish insiders manage to thwart any possibility of trying something new.

Dr. Felder has found repeatedly in his 25 years as a psychotherapist and organizational consultant that "It's frustrating for you personally and it's inefficient for the group as a whole when great new ideas get shot down by stubborn insiders who refuse to listen to anyone but their loyal inner circle."

Becoming more effective as a change-agent

In his book *FITTING IN IS OVERRATED*, Felder suggests a variety of creative ways to get your ideas included and taken seriously, even in groups, families, and organizations that have been hesitant about change for many years. Here are three realistic steps that can improve the clout and impact you have in any situation where you have great ideas that are slightly ahead of your peers:

1. Start by taking the chip off your shoulder. Felder

Making Sure Your



Good Ideas

Get Included

has found that many people who have been treated like an outsider in their family, their workplace, or their volunteer activities tend to get a chip on their shoulder – a verbal or nonverbal attitude that communicates to the group, "I know you're not going to like what I'm about to say, but here goes anyway." He suggests, "Rather than sabotaging your own good ideas by the resentful way you present them, why not try something different this time." He recommends saying to yourself, "Since my good idea can definitely help this group, family, or organization, my biggest challenge is to find the right allies, the right wording, and the right timing for building a supportive consensus."

For example, if you have been a sometimes-overlooked member of a parent-teacher association, a condo association, a religious group, or a social group where a few insiders have tended to shoot down your good ideas repeatedly, you might be tempted to be sarcastic or ironic the next time you offer a new suggestion, as if to say, "You all have

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never taken my ideas seriously and I don't expect much support on this one either." Or you can say to yourself, "I think this group could benefit from this new idea, but only if I break my old pattern and I do it smarter this time by finding the right teammates, the right type of presentation, and the precise moments when people tend to be most open to hearing something new and different."

2. Have a brainstorming phone call or lunch with one or two insiders who are secure enough and smart enough to back you up on this new idea. Usually when a person looks at a cliquish group, he or she thinks they are all in agreement and that no one will ever have the courage to step outside the status quo and support any changes. But if you look carefully at any group, family, or organization you will find a few somewhat-innovative insiders who have the wisdom and the strength to break with the pack occasionally to support needed changes. Identifying those few insiders who are willing to align themselves with an insightful outsider is crucial to whether or not your good ideas will be heard and taken seriously.

For instance, in your extended family it might be pointless to suggest to the most rigid family members any changes in the way the next family holiday gathering will take place unless you first identify and build an alliance with one or two creative insiders who have the clout to influence the rigid insider who is most resistant to making any changes. Only when you have the backing and support of these important allies (the creative insiders who are secure enough and smart enough to speak up for good new solutions) can your excellent ideas receive the hearing and consideration they deserve.

3. Make sure the most rigid or cautious insiders know ahead of time that you aren't trying to disrupt or change most of the things they cherish, but that you are offering a small, helpful solution to one specific problem that almost everyone knows could use some improvement. Rather than seeing the cautious or stubborn insider (who tends to shoot down your good ideas) as an all-powerful giant, consider for a moment that this flesh-and-blood human being might actually be quite insecure or quite afraid of losing something if changes are made. This person will need some reassurance from you and others so that he or she knows you aren't trying to shift too many things that are familiar and comforting to this person.

You may need to tell him or her, "We definitely want to keep most of the traditions the way they've always been, but we're just trying out a temporary experiment to see if we can improve this one particular aspect that hasn't been working lately. How about if we try the temporary experiment just this once and then we'll see if it improves things or if we should go back to what we had before." Using this kind of compassionate, gentle, reassuring approach will often help an entrenched insider to see that your outsider insights are not as threatening as they first thought they might be.



PLANNING A SAFE HOLIDAY PARTY

According to Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD), at least 50 percent of all holiday traffic fatalities involve alcohol. If you are hosting a gathering of co-workers, friends, or family this holiday season, follow the precautionary recommendations below to help ensure the safety of your guests, both during and after your party:

Recommendations for an alcohol-safe event

- 1. Consider hosting an alcohol-free party. According to The National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, more than half of Americans are not current drinkers.*
- 2. If you do serve alcohol, be sure to have plenty of non-alcoholic drinks available.*
- 3. Don't encourage or force guests to drink alcohol.*
- 4. Provide plenty of food so guests won't drink on an empty stomach.*
- 5. Prior to the beginning of your party, arrange a designated driver for those who are drinking alcohol.*
- 6. Never serve alcohol to anyone under age 21.*
- 7. If preparing an alcoholic punch, use a non-carbonated base such as fruit juice. Alcohol is absorbed into the blood stream faster when it has a carbonated base.*
- 8. Stop serving alcohol at least 60 minutes before your party ends. Only time sobers an individual who has been drinking.*
- 9. Be honest. When inviting guests who are known to drink to excess, tell them that drinking and driving is unacceptable at your party. Get their agreement to find alternate modes of transportation.*
- 10. Encourage lively conversation and group activities, such as games that keep the focus on fun, not alcohol.*
- 11. If some guests have too much to drink, drive them home or arrange for alternate transportation. Make sure all your guests leave with a sober driver.*

HMS is here to help

If you or a dependent needs help with issues related to alcohol or drug use, contact Human Management Services (HMS) for FREE and CONFIDENTIAL counseling, referrals or information. Remember, HMS is always available to help you or your immediate family members with any type of personal, family or work-related concern. Why not call an HMS counselor today? We're here to help you.

HMS SERVICES

PROVIDED BY YOUR EMPLOYER FOR YOU AND YOUR DEPENDENTS

This confidential prepaid program is designed to help employees and their eligible dependents resolve problems which may be interfering with their personal, work or home life. HMS offers help for marital and family issues, substance abuse, job concerns, emotional problems, life adjustments, legal issues, financial matters, and elder care and child care referrals.

If you're experiencing problems which are causing concern, you and your HMS counselor can work as a team to find solutions.

Call HMS for Help:

24 Hours a day: 800-343-2186

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